



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Frequently Asked Questions About The San Diego Main Library Project

Why does San Diego need a new Main Library?

More than 600,000 patrons visit the current Central Library each year to use its many resources. But . . .

- The collection outgrew the building's capacity 25 years ago, and there is no room for growth.
- More than half the collection has to be stored in two basement levels, closed to the public and available only upon request.
- It has minimal space for exhibits and displays that complement and promote collections.
- It has inadequate auditorium space for cultural events.
- As a thriving and growing city, San Diego deserves a first-class Main Library for its diverse population.

What role are libraries playing in the technological age?

In our technological environment, libraries perform the same role they always have: they pool resources to increase access to information and recreational materials for everyone. As technology has improved to make many aspects of our lives easier and more efficient, it has done the same for libraries.

- Demand for print and audio-visual materials continues to increase, while technology speeds our access to these materials.
- The Library subscribes to many premier online resources, such as periodical archives and statistical databases, but many publishers will not license these for remote (home) use.
- Librarians offer professional assistance in online research.
- Contrary to popular belief, only a very small fraction of information available in book form is also available electronically. Less than 1 percent of the more than 110 million items in the Library of Congress have been electronically formatted.

Why is a Main Library essential?

The Main Library is the heart, brain and nerve center of our public library system. It provides a centralized operating system for 35 diverse branches spread over 331 square miles.

- It is the only patent and trademark depository in the region and the largest public resource center south of Los Angeles.
- The Main Library holds a vast collection of the region's historical archives, including newspapers and government documents.
- More than a half-million unique titles, as well as in-depth collections, are kept at the Main Library. These are prohibitively expensive to duplicate at branches, yet necessary for meeting the information and knowledge needs of the San Diego community.
- Professional librarians at the Main Library provide subject expertise and collection development, which support branch libraries.
- The Main Library is not only centrally located for the entire San Diego region, it is also downtown's branch library, serving 43 local schools within a 2 mile area, 11 community agencies and a quickly-growing residential population that has nearly doubled in the last 7 years.

Will there be parking and easy access to public transit at the new Main Library?

Unlike the Central Library, which has no dedicated parking, the new Main Library will have 250 parking spaces on site with an additional 250 parking spaces dedicated for library visitors in a structure across the street. Over a thousand spaces will also be available within 500 feet of the building. The new library will be located on the San Diego Trolley line and close to a trolley station that serves both the Blue and Orange lines. In addition, bus lines and bus stops will be in close proximity to the new Main Library.

How will the library project be financed?

The \$185 million project will be paid for with \$80 million in redevelopment funds, \$85 million in donations and a \$20 million state grant.

-- more --

Frequently Asked Questions about the New Main Library Project

How does the New Main Library support your local branch library?

The City's Library Building Program focuses on rejuvenating the entire library system by building not only a new Main Library, but also building or expanding other branch libraries throughout San Diego. A strong Central Library is essential to the operation of the entire library system. It currently directs all disabled access, technology and web-based services, children and adult programming, and telephone reference questions for all 37 branches. Due to the central coordination of these services, the Central Library handled over 1.6 million reference questions, served 23,000 children in the Summer Reading Program and served numerous families via its award winning literacy services in 2006.

Furthermore, branch libraries typically hold books and audiovisual materials that cater to general interest. Usually the collection focuses on the most popular titles and topics. Unlike branch libraries, a central library has staff and a collection with in-depth information about a great variety of topics. Specific sections of the current Central Library include:

- Art, Music and Recreation – Audio books, DVDs, videos, CDs, sheet music, picture files and sports.
- California, Genealogy and Special Collections – Local history, family history and rare books.
- Children's Room – Picture books, curriculum development, parenting kits, science fair resources.
- History and Travel – Biography, geography, American and world history, encyclopedias.
- Literature and Languages – Fiction, foreign languages, psychology and religion.
- Newspaper Room – Newspapers from San Diego and other major cities.
- Science and Government Publications – Health, tax forms, car repair manuals, cookbooks, patents and topographic maps.
- Social Sciences and Business Reference – Investments, business, politics and government and wedding planning.
- Teen Space – SAT study guides, comic books, graphic novels and homework assistance.

How will the new Main Library be an improvement over the current Central Library?

The current Central Library is 53 years old and was built for a San Diego population of only 544,000 people. Today the city has more than 1.27 million and is expected to grow to more than 2 million by 2020. More than two thirds of the Central Library's collection is stored on two basement levels that are not open to the public. Its auditorium only seats 180 people. Also, plumbing and electrical systems are inadequate, there's no dedicated parking, and there simply is not enough public space in the building to meet the needs of the people the library serves. By contrast, the new main library will have:

- 9,646-square foot children's area, more than three times larger than the one in the Central Library.
- Outdoor plaza and café.
- 350-seat auditorium.
- Three-story, domed reading room with a view of San Diego Bay.
- 400-seat multi-purpose room.
- 3,630-square-foot teen center.
- A technology demonstration center.
- 500 dedicated parking spaces and over 1,000 within 500 feet of the building.
- 407 computers, more than four times the number at the current Central Library.
- 3,000 square feet of gallery and exhibit space.

For more information about the Main Library project, visit the Library on the City's Web site at <http://www.sandiego.gov/public-library>.

###

The City of San Diego Public Library – Your Link to the Past and Gateway to the Future